

Wiltshire Council Human Resources

Career Grade Policy and Procedure

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

What is it?

This policy and procedure details the arrangements for employees who are part of a career grade structure.

Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to all Wiltshire Council employees, unless a separate contractual policy applies to a transferred employee to whom separate TUPE terms and conditions of employment apply. This policy does not apply to teaching and non-teaching staff employed in maintained schools or academies.

When does it apply?

This policy applies to roles that sit within an agreed career grade structure. For applicable roles, this will be recorded on the role description (RD).

When does it not apply?

This policy does not apply to roles that sit outside of an agreed career grade structure.

What are the main points?

Career grade structures

1. A career grade structure is a series of roles within the same professional area with increasing levels of job demands, responsibilities, knowledge and skills, linked together by a structured programme of development. Attainment of identified criteria will form the basis for progression within the career grade structure. This provides an opportunity for progression within a team and supports the recruitment and retention of staff.

2. Progression through a career grade structure is based upon the attainment of specified qualifications, skills and experience and there being a vacancy which is budgeted for at the appropriate level and there being a service need for work required at the higher level.
3. Each role within the structure will require different duties and responsibilities and will have been evaluated accordingly to be assigned a grade under the council's pay and grading structure.
4. A career grade structure will provide clear distinction between the levels of work. It would therefore usually be expected to see at least one grade difference between a role and the next role within the structure.
5. A career grade structure may consist of apprenticeship level roles increasing to senior roles depending upon the skills needed within the team.

Implementing a career grade structure

6. Suitable teams and roles for career grade structures are those that clearly follow a structured progression arrangement which is likely to be linked to the attainment of a professional qualification or level within this and accredited by a professional association/body.
7. Such arrangements are likely to require the employee to be a member of a professional association/body and to provide evidence in support of their membership in the form of the attainment of a professional qualification (or level within this) and a portfolio of evidence demonstrating the required level of experience and skills.
8. A career grade will typically consist of (but is not limited to):
 - qualification routes progressing from entry level up to masters level (or above) in the professional/occupational field
 - a range of skill requirements that increase in complexity with the increase in grade
 - a range of linked tasks that increase in difficulty with the increase in grade
9. Before a career grade structure and progression framework can be implemented, this must be approved by your strategic HR business partner and Finance.
10. Each level within the career grade structure requires a role description. Each role description must be assessed and graded through the

council's job evaluation scheme and the set of roles confirmed as a career grade.

11. It should be identified on each role description that the role forms part of a career grade and where the role fits within the career grade structure.
12. A career grade structure progression framework setting out the criteria for progression, must be established either within or alongside the role descriptions. This must set out all competencies and criteria required to progress to each level within the career grade (subject to a vacancy and work being required at each level).
13. At the outset, the optimal number of posts at each level of work within the career grade must be agreed. This should reflect the numbers of posts needed for the team to function effectively and within budget.
14. HR will hold a record of all approved career grade structures and role descriptions at the time of implementation. The relevant competency framework required for progression once agreed by HR, should be maintained by the service.

Progression

15. Progression through a career grade structure must be based upon achievement of the specified programme of development, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - academic qualification thresholds
 - experience and skills thresholds
 - competencies within the professional framework (where applicable)**and**
 - a vacancy and funding at the career grade level is available within the team (with work required at the skill level)
 - a competitive selection process has taken place
16. Progression in a career grade structure is not automatic based solely on the achievement of a qualification and/or new skills or time served in role. There must also be the need for the higher level of work within the team and a funded vacancy must be available.
17. In exceptional circumstances where a funded vacancy is not available, any change in establishment must be agreed with Finance and the HR Business Partner for the service area.

Application

18. Progression through a career grade structure must be via a successful competitive selection exercise. A vacant position must be available in Oracle. If the position is not set up a requisition will need to be created in the usual way via Oracle.
19. Applications for the progression opportunity will be ringfenced to employees within the career grade structure. All ringfenced employees should be informed of the progression opportunity available and invited to submit an expression of interest.
20. Employees wishing to progress should submit their expression of interest for the position, setting out how they meet the requirements of the higher level role description and the competencies set out within the progression framework.
21. The line manager will shortlist those employees who meet the criteria and invite them to attend a selection interview.
22. A competitive selection exercise in the form of an interview must be carried out to select the most suitable candidate for progression in line with the recruitment policy and procedure. Should only one candidate be shortlisted for the progression opportunity, an interview process must still be carried out.
23. Employees who are unsuccessful should be provided with feedback (where required) on areas that need further development.
24. There is no right of appeal against career progression appointment decisions.
25. If there are no successful candidates from the ring-fenced employees, the vacancy must be advertised fully in line with the recruitment policy and procedure.

Development discussions and building a portfolio of evidence

26. One to ones and the appraisal process should be used to monitor work performance and identify areas for development to support the process of progression through a career grade structure.
27. Employees with their line manager should discuss the process of progression through a career grade structure including (but not limited to):
 - identification of current development needs

- identification of opportunities to meet gaps in competency, experience and skills
- creation of a development plan
- creation of a portfolio of evidence

Funding career grades

28. At the outset, the funding for the whole of the career grade must be agreed based on the optimal number of roles required for each level of work required within the team.
29. The structure must be within budget and approved by Finance.
30. Managers will have discretion in how they appoint to posts at different levels of work (and grades) within the career grade structure, depending on the skills, experience and qualifications of successful applicants. However, this must be within the budget agreed at the outset for the structure.
31. Funding will sit at the highest grade level for the career grade structure regardless of which level within the career grade the position is filled.

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been [Equality Impact Assessed](#) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

Advice and guidance

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy you should contact your line manager or raise a service request via the Oracle Helpdesk.